



The Christmas Party Murder Mini-Mystery Facilitator Guide





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First of all, I would like to say thank you for choosing *The Christmas Party Murder*, an interactive “Mingle” mystery from Shot In The Dark Mysteries.

It's the most wonderful time of the year – a time of snow falling, twinkling lights and the excitement of Santa's big arrival on Christmas day. It's also the time for entertaining, and friends and family have gathered to celebrate the season. The festivities begin with a bang - the announcement of a murder! David Reese, a guest at the party, is found dead in the hallway! The celebration quickly turns into an interrogation as six suspects are identified. Amidst eggnog and Christmas carols, it's up to the party guests to learn who killed David Reese and why!

Please take a moment to read Shot In The Dark Mysteries’ official disclaimer. Shot In The Dark Mysteries does not guarantee results and will not be held in any way accountable for any personal injury, death and/or loss to the players, facilitators or observers. This game and the materials herein are solely for entertainment purposes and cannot be reproduced or reused after one play without the express consent of Shot In The Dark Mysteries. The characters and story are fictional. Any similarity to actual living or dead people or events is purely coincidental.

Whew! Now that we have that over with, here are a few suggestions for making your party a roaring success.

Your mystery materials are designed in a way to ensure that you, as the host or facilitator, are able to play along and solve the mystery if you so choose.



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Instructions

As the facilitator, the following instructions will ensure your mystery flows smoothly. If you have any questions prior to the event, please send me an email at mysterymaiden@shotinthedarkmysteries.com (or instant message me on the live chat on the website). Your mystery is classified as an interactive "Mingle" mystery, perfect for getting your guests interacting! It's up to the guests to question the suspects, identify holes in their stories and determine who had the motive, means and opportunity to commit murder!

Here are the items you have, and will need, for the mystery:

- Suspect Guides – to be delivered to each suspect before the date of the party, or as soon as they arrive on the day of the event.
- Facilitator Instructions – you're reading them right now!
- Introduction (found at the end of this guide)
- Confession – This reveals the killer, and can be read to the group en mass as is
- Invitations
- Accusation Forms
- Name tags
- Suspect List with Character Complexity Rating

The introduction provides some questions that will get the investigators going. Sleuths are encouraged to ask their own questions, but if they ask something that is not explained in the suspect information, the suspects should reply with the answer, "I have nothing to say about that." This is explained to the suspects in their Suspect Guide as well as to the participants in the Introduction.



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All of your game materials have been custom designed to be visually stunning to you and your guests. It's best to have the materials printed at a printer or local stationary store (like Staples or Kinkos). This will ensure quality and save you ink and wear and tear on your own printer. We recommend colour printing on a high stock, but what paper and ink you decide to use for your mystery materials is entirely up to you.

How To Use The Clues (Found in the Suspect Guides)

There are two types of information the suspects will receive. The first is "Hide" information. This type of information is to be kept secret as much as possible, and not offered freely. If the suspect is asked directly about the hide information however, they must answer truthfully or the game will not work.

The other type of information is called "Share" information. Share information **MUST** be shared with others, and includes things like alibis and suspicious things they saw others doing around the time of the murder. The Share information is what the suspects will use to direct suspicion away from themselves and toward the other suspects. There always seems to be one suspect at the party who wants to appear to be the killer and will try to bait people to interrogate them harder by not giving any of their share information away.

After serious psychoanalysis, we have determined this person craves attention, be it positive or negative. But since we're not throwing a mystery party to deal with people's personal issues, let's just say this person is not cool. Don't fret though, because all suspects are advised in their suspect guide that they have to share their "Share" information. If you have a tight-lipped suspect who still insists on being evasive to the point of party-wrecking, gently remind them that the Share information needs to be shared or they'll ruin everyone's good time.



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All clues are directed at the player (for example, "you saw the murderer running down a dark hallway"). For the sake of getting everyone into the game, share clues should be transferred into the first person (for example, "I saw the murderer running down a dark hallway") and into the player's own words.

Before the event or as the suspects arrive, deliver each suspect's corresponding "Suspect Guide". This will give the suspects instructions on how to play as well as their possible secret motives for the murder. We recommend giving your suspects their information as soon as possible in order to allow them to read through it and get familiar with the information before the party. This information will give them everything they need to play the mystery.

Some mysteries inform the killer that they are the killer. We don't do this for two reasons. First, not knowing allows all suspects to be completely honest with the information they receive. Second, it allows all players to piece together the mystery equally. With one suspect not investigating, it quickly becomes clear to the other players who the killer is and your mystery ends up ruined. In our experience, your mystery is more successful when the killer isn't aware they are the killer.



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How To Use The Character Complexity Rating

If you haven't already noticed, your suspect descriptions include a "Character Complexity Rating". This is a rating given to each suspect to tell you, the host, which roles are more complicated so you can assign your suspects to the appropriate guest. The ratings are out of five, with three being a mildly complicated role and five being a more intricate role.

How To Use The Suspect Guides

Suspect guides are provided in your game materials in separate files for each person playing. The guide describes the character they'll be playing, their motives, what information they know that can be shared with everyone else and instructions for how to play. The guides are formatted in individual files so you can easily send the .pdf file to each guest playing a character. Even better, if you, as the host, would like to play along, you don't have to worry about handling the clues and potentially spoiling the mystery for yourself. Simply email the file to each suspect before the party or hand it to them as they arrive at the party.

How To Use The Invitations

Once you've figured out which guest is playing which suspect, you can use the print invitations provided to invite your guests. Print them off on your own if you've got a good computer, or take them to a printers to have them printed and save your ink.



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The invitations have been designed to fit inside a standard 4x6 invitation envelope. The bottom three lines on the invitation are for any notes you would like to include to your guests, or can be used as extra address lines. Many hosts like to include a suspect list or a hand-written note about the character they guest will be playing if they know ahead of time that the invitee will be attending.

How To Use The "PLAY" Website

The PLAY website for your game is located at:

<http://www.shotinthedarkmysteries.com/play/>

At that link, simply select your game to be directed to the PLAY website for your mystery.

Send your guests this link to view a trailer video for the mystery, get information on how to play and get a buzz going about your party!

How To Use The Name tags

Your game kit includes name tags. They are a standard name tag size and will work with plastic name tag holders and most stationary. This way you can print the name tags and use them as-is, with standard name tag holders or print them on sticker name tags that can be purchased at any stationary store. Each suspect has a name tag with their suspect name. You are also provided an extra sheet of name tags for additional guests with eight name tags per page. Simply print off as many copies of the blank name tags page in the "Name tags" file as you need for your guests.



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How To Use The Introduction

The game begins with an introduction, which is included here within your facilitator instructions. Print off the introduction and become familiar with it. Once the introduction has been shared, unleash the guests for interrogations!

How To Use The Confession

There is also a Confession at the end of the game. This will reveal the identity of the killer and their motives. If you are having guests cast their accusations in a ballot box, you will want to announce the deadline for casting accusations before you reveal the Confession in order to give everyone time to get their vote in the box. The confession is included in a separate file so you can print it on its own without the worry of stumbling across it as you read the rest of your facilitator instructions. This way, you can solve the mystery too!



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How To Use The Accusation Forms

Your mystery includes accusation forms. Print off and/or copy that page as many times as needed to ensure everyone attending your mystery party has a form in order to cast their accusation at the end of the party. Before you reveal the killer in the Confession, hand out the accusation forms and ensure everyone playing, even those not playing a suspect, have one. If you are awarding prizes or trophies for best sleuth etc., you will want to give your players enough notice to finish their questioning and fill out their ballot form. From there you can have each person tell the group who they accused and why, or gather the accusation forms and put them in the ballot box. After the Confession you can peek through the accusations and award prizes/titles etc. as necessary.



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This is an overview of how your event might go, to give you an idea of what to expect:

- Guests/Participants arrive
- Mingling
- Announcement of murder (Introduction)
- Guests/Participants interact to gather clues from suspects for the pre-determined amount of time (can be played in an hour, but the amount of time you allow is up to you, and unique to your event).
- Sleuths cast accusations (encourage dialog about accusations, their reasons for accusing the suspect they chose and their feelings about the motives. For a smaller group, each person can have a moment to sling their accusation. For a larger group, you may want to ask a few people for their accusation and reasons).
- The killer is revealed (Confession).

For more information, tips and suggestions, please visit:

[http://www.shotinthedarkmysteries.com/blog/
what-to-expect/](http://www.shotinthedarkmysteries.com/blog/what-to-expect/)

and

[http://www.shotinthedarkmysteries.co
m/blog/party-tips/](http://www.shotinthedarkmysteries.com/blog/party-tips/)



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Additional Guests

In the case where you have more guests than suspects, don't worry! This is an "Interactive" game, which means that it can be played by an unlimited number of guests without anyone being left out. Just as long as you have enough people at your party to play suspects, the number of people investigating is unlimited!

Investigators can work together in teams as well. You could pair up your extra guests with a suspect so they can be privy to the Hide information and also interrogate suspects to piece together the mystery.

If you have a few extra guests that you want to be as involved in the mystery as the suspects, consider having them read the Introduction and/or Confession.

Additional Tips

- If you are serving alcohol at your party, play the mystery earlier in the evening. It's our experience that the longer people drink the less coherent the suspect information becomes!
- Provide notepads and pens for your guests to keep track of all of their information
- Remind your guests to bring reading glasses if they wear them
- Before or after the introduction, give each suspect the opportunity to introduce themselves to the group, using the information in their character description

Our Facebook page has a discussion forum with more great tips from other mystery party hosts as well! Come by, get ideas and share your own at:

<http://www.facebook.com/shotinthedarkmysteries>



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If, after reading this guide you still have questions before the party, please don't hesitate to contact us. We will do everything in our power to ensure your game runs smoothly. Having said that, facilitating the game is easy - just relax and have fun!

Sincerely,



Leigh Clements
The Mystery Maiden
Shot In The Dark Mysteries.com